LIBRARY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

1939

THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF MARCH.

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

One month after the outbreak of war I commenced duties as your Medical Officer of Health. Owing to the extra amount of work resulting from Evacuation and A.R.P. time could be given only to urgent and essential Public Health matters.

The increase in the population brought about by the influx of evacuees from danger areas has not adversely effected the general health of this District, but having regard to the primitive sanitary arrangements in the Town, one cannot favourably forecast the future. It is regrettable to have to report that the plans for a new sewerage scheme submitted in 1938 have not yet received the official approval of the Ministry of Health.

The request by the Minister and my short term of office this year are two good reasons for the brevity of this report for 1939 which I now present.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J.F.Dawson,

Medical Officer of Health.

STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health:- S.Governor,M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O. (Till 30th September 1939). J.F.Dawson, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Engineer, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.) W.S.Pickett, M.Inst.M. & Cy.E., A.M.I.S.E., M.Inst.R.A., M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Assistant Sanitary Inspector:- P.McKenna, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	19.777
Population (Registrar-General's Estimate mid.1939)	12,290
Number of inhabited houses	3,800
Rateable Value	£49,154
Sum represented by a penny rate	£201

VITAL STATISTICS.

		Total.	M.	F.		
Live Births.	Legitimate	161	70	91	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident Population mid-1939	13.18
	Illegitimate	11	4	7		
Stillbirths.		11	4	7	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still births:-	64.53
Deaths.		129	62	67	Death Rate per 1,000 estimated average population:-	10.14

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.
Puerperal Sepsis	nil	nil
Other Puerperal causes	1	5.46
Total	1	5.46

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1,000 live births	38.67
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	38.67
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	28
" " Measles (all ages)	nil
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	nil
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	1

Laboratory Facilities.

The Virol Pathological Research Laboratory examine specimens submitted for examination.

Ambulance Facilities.

Infectious Diseases are removed to hospital by the Wisbech Isolation Hospital Ambulance. Accident and other hospital cases are removed by the March Urban District Council Ambulance. These arrangements have proved adequate.

Since the commencement of the war, three vehicles have been fitted out as ambulances which will be used in the event of casualties occurring as the result of air raids.

Nursing in the Home.

Nursing in the home is carried out by 5 district nurses.

Clinics.

Under the administration of the Isle of Ely County Council a Chest Clinic is held at the County Hall weekly. School clinics are held 3 days of the week, this service was extended to 6 days weekly when evacuation took place.

Hospitals.

There are no Hospitals voluntary or public in the District.

Air Raid Precautions.

As a result of the war there has been established a First Aid Post and a mobile unit, each in the charge of a Medical Officer. There are also two first aid points. These will deal with casualties resulting from air raids if such casualties occur in the district. The mobile unit will also deal with any casualties occurring in the North Witchford Area.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops are inspected frequently to see that the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Order 1926 are being complied with. Samples of milk produced by persons in this district holding licences under the Milk (Special Designations) Orders 1936 and 1938 are taken from time to time by members of the County Council's staff.

Meat and Other Foods. Every effort is made to ensure that all meat slaughtered in this district is examined prior to being offered for sale for human consumption. Shops, stalls and vehicles are periodically inspected in order to see that the Public Health (Meat) Regulations are being complied with.

Schools.

The sanitary condition of the March Schools is satisfactory. Evidence of over-crowding exists at one of the Infant Schools. This condition is favourable towards the spreading of infectious disease and should not be allowed to exist.

Closets.

There are 850 pail & vault closets in the Urban District and 1025 cesspools.

Drainage & Sewerage.

Plans for an up-to-date sewerage scheme were submitted to the Ministry of Health in November 1938. It is regrettable that no action was taken by the Ministry with the result that March must be satisfied with the present antideluvian system of sewage disposal.

As time goes on the cost of having this essential work done is gradually but steadily rising, and in the meantime collection and disposal of night soil, which includes the emptying of cesspools, septic tanks, pail closets and privy middens amounts to over £1,000 per annum.

Housing.

Unfortunately the war has put a stop to any work which might have been done in this direction. Houses are now occupied which in peace time would be regarded as unfit for human habitation. Owing to the influx of evacuees the standard of over-crowding as laid down by the Housing Act has of necessity been ignored.

Infectious Diseases.

During the year an outbreak of Diphtheria occurred, 3 children died from the disease.

Diphtheria is a preventable disease and if parents availed themselves of the opportunity to have their children protected against Diphtheria, deaths from the disease would not occur.

During the year 583 or 29.9% of the March school children and 259 or 75.7% of the evacuees were immunised. Immunisation was carried out at the schools. The prophylactic used was Toxoid-Antitoxin Floccules (Suspension).

Number of Cases of Infectious Diseases Notified.

Scarlet Fever.....	3
Diphtheria.....	39
Pneumonia.....	2
Puerperal Pyrexia.....	4
Erysipelas.....	6

The table shewn above requires no further comment.

MUMPS. An outbreak of Mumps during the spring accounted for 52 cases.

Tuberculosis.

4 new cases were notified to me in the last 3 months of the year. 2 male (respiratory) 2 female (1 respiratory, 1 non-respiratory). I have no record of any cases notified in the first 9 months of the year.

Deaths.

Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
M.	F.	M.	F.
3	3	1	1